Folio Society book in 1949 because he wished to have a complete, unexpurgated text of Grimm's *Folk Tales*. That the book had hand-coloured etchings by Cruikshank (actually, they are probably by another family member) was, presumably, a bonus. Davies continued buying Folio Society books, for himself, and as presents, until the end of his life. He also accurately defined the constituency of the Folio Society as the "clerisy." By that he meant "those who read for pleasure, but not for idleness; who read for pastime but not to kill time; who love books, but do not live by books."

The Folio Society, an unlikely publishing experiment, flourishes after fifty years and seems likely to endure until its centenary and beyond. An important text with appropriate illustrations presented in codex form to a discerning audience will, despite electronic media, endure and the Society will have its part to play. The record of its accomplishments so far is to be welcomed and added to the reference shelf of every respectable library, private or institutional.

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Everyone agrees that very rapid developments in information technology have dominated the landscape of the last half of the twentieth century, and everyone accepts that this technology is having a profound impact on communication and work. Prompted, in part it seems, by this transformation, coupled with millennial angst, a flurry of books treating the history and future of print/media culture have appeared recently. Sven Birkerts, for example, in his widely read *The Gutenberg Elegies* (1994) offered prognostications on the "fate of reading in an electronic age." And several Canadian writers, including Ronald J. Deibert, *Parchment, Printing, and Hypermedia: Communication in World Order Transformation* (1997), and Derrick De Kerckhove, *The Skin of Culture: Investigating the New Electronic Reality* (1995), have entered the arena. To this list we can now add Meadow's *Ink Into Bits*.

As a professor of information science Meadow brings his own unique perspective to the topic, allowing him to write with as much authority as anyone. He assumes that "only people who are interested in books, journals,
magazines, newspapers or the visual media” will read his book. If only readers of this inclination open the pages they will find an interesting volume; but it would be a shame if others pass it by. Meadow uses a broad definition for “books,” because as he sees it the distinction between books and other media “will very likely disappear.” While it is certainly debatable whether this distinction will fully fade away (reading, he acknowledges, is different from listening, and also different from viewing moving images), it is his discussion of the convergence of media that warrants wider readership than only those interested in “books.”

Meadow expects to get readers “thinking about effects” of “big things [that] are in the off’ing,” and although he firmly presents his own opinions, he is not an uncritical evangelist for the “great, glorious electronic future” (xiv). In fact, he aims to “get beyond the hype of the new technology” and deal directly with the issues resulting from the new media.

This book is more a history and implications of communications technology over the past century than a history of print culture and recent developments. At times Meadow’s limited understanding of aspects of early books leads to superficial statements. He implies, for example, that in early books the extent of graphic images was restricted to “first letter illumination” (42) when illuminated books, in fact, were often ablaze with imagery that engages the attention of even modern-day eyes. He further states that “books are fixed in content whereas oral compositions are not” (41). A review of the burgeoning literature on early print culture confirms that oral compositions were often very stable, and that the text of early printed books was frequently much less fixed than one would guess, even given the technology.

These weak comparisons aside, the line of Meadow’s reasoning is easily apparent as he traces developments in communications technologies that have lead to our current multimedia world. Throughout, Meadow raises a wide range of significant questions as he ruminates about reading and comprehension; linear and hypertexts; adoption of new technologies, their markets and distribution; protection of consumers; among other topics. Like many others he predicts that the world of print culture in a few years hence will be markedly different than the present day. But until publishers insist on computer developers delivering a much more convenient and readable “electronic” book, printed paper books will persist. “The change won’t happen to us in our time,” he writes. “It will happen to some other people in their time” (215). Because of his own extensive research on information retrieval, Meadow can comment with authority on this matter.

Meadow writes in a straightforward manner as he explains sometimes complicated technological developments and related transformations in the publishing and information industry. Readers with little knowledge on the subject will find this volume informative. Rather than being an unabashed
advocate for new media, Meadow worries whether readers of the future will be “snippers of items, rather than comprehenders and deep thinkers about what they read” (48). He wonders, too, whether modern day “publishing in a hurry reduces time to evaluate and verify content” (130). He acknowledges that there is “a lot of emotion invested in books and printing” (198) even though books have been evolving for centuries. Nonetheless, new skills will be needed to read in the multimedia world.

What sets this volume apart from others is the emphasis that Meadow has placed on explaining various technologies directing the transition from many media to a single medium. By discussing the convergence of technology, he can address publishing, reading, comprehension, and adoption of new media all in the same book. True to his objective he does not give answers to the many questions he raises, but these questions do encourage thinking. Meadow assumes that only current day readers will pick up this volume but future generations could pursue these pages for a good overview of how the new single media world came about and at the same time provide insights to the questions that Meadow posed.

Transformation is occurring, and it is rapid. Nonetheless, as Adrian Johns has argued cogently in his study of the influence of printing technology on society following Gutenberg, *The Nature of the Book: Print and Knowledge in the Making* (1998), decades or centuries pass before the full impact of a technology has unfolded.

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Festschriften are notoriously difficult books to read from cover to cover, and even more difficult to review. Typically, they are a kind of academic pot-luck supper assembled by colleagues and former students, and display little thematic unity or rationale other than the association of their authors with the scholar being honoured. *Books and Collectors 1200–1700* is an exception to this rule, and unexpectedly so, given the broad range of Andrew Watson’s interests and achievements as a cataloguer of medieval manuscripts, a palaeographer, and a historian of books, libraries, and scholarship in early